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10 ORIENTATION--information especially likely to be needed by users of a file as a frame of reference for understanding the materials classified elsewhere; organization of the file, special coding decisions, and evaluation of the file.

GUIDE TO THE AV3 DARD FILE

[This file contains information on the Dardic peoples who inhabit the high mountain areas north of Kashmir and south of the Hindu Kush. Leitner, who first used the term Dardistan to name the region, locates it between lat. 37° N and long. 73° E to lat. 35° N and long. 74° 30' E. In his widest sense, he includes within Dardistan the peoples of Shinaki, Chilasis, Astoris, Gilgitis, Dareylis, Hunza, Nagyr, Yasin, Chitral and Kafiristan. In terms of modern place names, Dardistan essentially includes the Gilgit Agency, the Astor District in Kashmir, and the Chitral and Dir states and upper reaches of the Swat River in the North-West Frontier Province of West Pakistan. Dard is not a name that any of the people of the area use to identify themselves. The Dardic language is a sub-branch of Indo-European, closely related to the Iranian and Indic languages. There are about 19 Dardic languages in 3 major groups: Western or Kafir (12), Central or Khowar (1), and Eastern or Dard (6). Islam is the main religion, although it is a very lax form. Moslem sex status and dietary laws appear not to be observed. In eastern Dardistan, an equally lax form of Buddhism is found. The aboriginal religion, involving fire worship and numerous nature deities seems to have a strong influence on the newer ones. No population figures are available for this area for any more than scattered valleys. A great variety of grains and fruits are cultivated and sheep, cattle, goats and silkworms are raised. A number of castes structure social relations between individuals and groups.

There are four sources in the file, all of them in English. 1: Leitner is the earliest account. His interest was in

linguistics, but he also included much on folklore, religion, history, and scattered bits of ethnography. Lorimer (2: Lorimer) was also interested in linguistics; but again the source contains information on folklore, religion, and local customs and beliefs. Comparative linguistic data on supernatural phenomena are also provided. 3: Muhammad contains texts of legends and folktales, a description of a marriage ceremony and ceremonies associated with seasonal activities. 4: Biddulph is the most general source in the file. While the basic concern is with geography, there is much on culture, especially on religion and social organization. There are also four chapters of history based largely on genealogical materials. Additional information from other files will also be found in some categories. The file's strongest areas are probably religion and folklore. Basic information is available in other areas but it is not extensive. The file was processed in 1955.]